



SB525 – Public Utilities - Energy Distribution Planning and Required Labor Standards

Testimony before

Senate Finance Committee

February 15, 2022

Position: Favorable

Madame Chair, Mr. Vice Chair and members of the committee, my name is Richard Deutschmann, and I represent the 750+ members of Indivisible Howard County. We are providing written testimony today in support of SB525, which would bring equity and climate-focus to our electrical distribution planning process. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We appreciate the leadership of Vice Chair Feldman in sponsoring this important legislation.

The State of Maryland is about to embark on a Distribution System Planning process. And we need to make sure that this process promotes equity, good paying jobs for those that need them the most, and a clear focus on decarbonizing the state while moving towards renewable sources of energy. SB525 does just that. It puts representatives of low-income communities, environmental and clean energy groups and labor unions at the table where this planning process is happening. The bill ensures that as we plan for the future of our electrical distribution system, we are doing this with clear goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, while providing for good paying jobs and family-supporting benefits.

Other states have shown us the way. Illinois, New York, California and others have set up similar parameters to their distribution planning process, and are reaping the benefits of a strong climate action plan, expansion of their electrified transportation and building sectors, and steps towards economic equity in places that have been left behind. For these reasons, we support SB525.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

We respectfully urge a favorable report.

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